

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (original): A rubber composition comprising a rubber component formed by compounding a styrene-butadiene copolymer (A) polymerized with a lithium based polymerization initiator, in which a polystyrene-conversion weight average molecular weight through a gel permeation chromatography is  $4.0 \times 10^5$ - $3.0 \times 10^6$  and a bound styrene content is 10-50 mass% and a vinyl bond content in butadiene portion is 20-70%, with 10-200 parts by mass of a hydrogenated styrene-isoprene copolymer (B) based on 100 parts by mass of the copolymer (A), in which a polystyrene-conversion weight average molecular weight through a gel permeation chromatography is  $5.0 \times 10^3$ - $2.0 \times 10^5$  and a bound styrene content is 25-70 mass% and not less than 60% of double bond in isoprene portion is hydrogenated, and having a relation between the bound styrene content of the polymer (A) and the bound styrene content of the polymer (B) satisfying the following equation:

Bound styrene content of polymer (B) > bound styrene content of polymer (A) + 10 (mass%).

2. (original): A rubber composition according to claim 1, wherein the polystyrene-conversion weight average molecular weight of the copolymer (A) is  $7.0 \times 10^5$ - $2.5 \times 10^6$ .

3. (currently amended): A rubber composition according to claim 1-~~or 2~~, wherein the bound styrene content of the copolymer (A) is 20-40 mass%.

4. (currently amended): A rubber composition according to ~~any one of claims 1-3~~ claim 1, wherein the vinyl bond content of the butadiene portion in the copolymer (A) is 30-60%.

5. (currently amended): A rubber composition according to ~~any one of claims 1-4~~ claim 1, wherein not less than 80% of double bond in the isoprene portion of the copolymer (B) is hydrogenated.

6. (currently amended): A rubber composition according to ~~any one of claims 1-5~~ claim 1, wherein the bound styrene content of the copolymer (A) and the bound styrene content of the copolymer (B) satisfy a relation of the following equation:

Bound styrene content of polymer (B) > bound styrene content of polymer (A) + 15 (mass%).

7. (currently amended): A rubber composition according to ~~any one of claims 1-6~~ claim 1, wherein the copolymer (B) is compounded in an amount of 20-100 parts by mass based on 100 parts by mass of the copolymer (A).

8. (currently amended): A pneumatic tire characterized by using a rubber composition as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1-7~~ claim 1 as a tread rubber.

9. (new): A rubber composition according to claim 2, wherein the bound styrene content of the copolymer (A) is 20-40 mass%.